

PART VII PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

DHCD held a Public Hearing on October 23, 2002 at its office location to afford residents the opportunity to comment on the Department's performance. The hearing notice is reproduced below:



PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Hearing on the District's Fiscal Year 2002 Performance in Meeting Housing and Community Development Needs with Federal Funds

The D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD or the Department) will hold a public hearing on October 23, 2002, to discuss the District's Fiscal Year 2002 performance in its use of funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. DHCD received \$44,283,000 from HUD in Fiscal Year 2002 through four programs: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program, and the Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. DHCD administered the CDBG and HOME funds directly, entered into an agreement with the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness to administer the ESG grant, and transferred the HOPWA grant to the D.C. Department of Health, HIV/AIDS Administration.

In preparation for the submission of the Fiscal Year 2002 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD, DHCD is soliciting public comment on the District's effectiveness during Fiscal Year 2002 at using federal funds to meet the District's housing and community development needs. These comments will form part of DHCD's and the District's evaluation, as is required by federal regulations (24 CFR 81.520). This hearing is reserved for a discussion of the District's Fiscal Year 2002 performance, and the Department will hold a separate set of needs hearings for its Fiscal Year 2004 action plan in November.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2002, at the Department of Housing and Community Development, 801 North Capitol Street, N.E., 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20002, from 6:30 – 9:30 PM. Interested parties are invited to submit testimony at the hearing. DHCD requests that interested parties submit an advance written copy of their testimony, along with their name and organization represented, to Paul Cohn at DHCD no later than Friday, October 19, 2002. Mr. Cohn may be reached by telephone at (202) 442-7233 or by e-mail at paul.cohn@dc.gov. Parties desiring to testify should contact Pamela Hillsman to be placed on the witness list. Ms. Hillsman may be reached at (202) 442-7256 or by e-mail at pamela.hillsman@dc.gov.



Anthony A. Williams
Mayor

Eric Price
Deputy Mayor for Planning
and Economic Development

Stanley Jackson
Director
Department of Housing and Community Development

Below is a summary of the hearings.

**SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 23, 2002
“HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PERFORMANCE HEARING FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA”**

DHCD’s performance hearing was held at 6:30 P.M. on October, 23, 2002 in the Department’s board room, 801 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, DC.

The following is a summary of the testimony presented.

Steve E. Counts, Green Door Board of Trustees: “DHCD outdid themselves this year in communication to our agency in our efforts to file loan and grant requests.” Green Door appreciates DHCD staff’s responsiveness and the Department’s improved handouts.

Gail Chow, Green Door: “The District of Columbia is in desperate need of affordable housing for all people with disabilities.” Green Door appreciates the work that went into the Request for Proposals process and hopes there will be multiple funding rounds annually, and that “financing, grants and forgivable loans will be available to create new housing as well as to preserve affordable special needs housing ...” Green Door supports DHCD’s plans for using \$3.0 million from the Housing Production Trust Fund to develop barrier-free and other special needs housing, and it advocates for the District to appoint the HPTF Board. Green Door supports DHCD’s efforts to develop a comprehensive housing strategy. It finds the DHCD website useful and offers some suggestions for content.

George Rothman, President & CEO, MANNA, Inc.: MANNA is “pleased with the progress DHCD has made under the direction of Mr. Jackson during Fiscal Year 2002.” Morale has been boosted, and the Notice of Funding Availability process was smooth. Nonetheless, there is a need for consistent funding for the Tenant Purchase program. The transaction costs associated with preserving small and medium size multifamily buildings make Tenant Purchase funding a critical need. These funds should be awarded outside the NOFA process, because tenant purchase opportunities may not coincide with the NOFA. DHCD also should award more of its HOME and CDBG funding through the Request for Proposals than it is doing for FY 2003. MANNA also encourages DHCD to revive the Homestead Multifamily Program, which - by offering low acquisition costs - enables groups to convert them for affordable homeownership.

Cammie Lindsay, President of the 1443 Oak Street Tenant Association: DHCD “should set aside a pot of money for tenants’ purchase.” It is important for tenant organizations that are buying their buildings to have access to funds when there is a deadline for them to exercise their first right to purchase.

Mario Cristaldo, MANNA, Inc., on behalf of Shermaine Taylor, 1441 Spring Road Tenants Association: Funding should be set aside, apart from the NOFA process, to help tenant organizations exercise their first right to purchase. There should be a Tenants Purchase Fund in place.

Mary Jackson, ANC 7E-04 Commissioner: DHCD must take a more active part in overseeing the work of the D.C. Housing Authority. DCHA is not being held accountable. Housing that serves

large families is being phased out through the HOPE VI process. There is a need for large and family-size rental units. DHCD should refer to the National Housing Law Project report of June 25, 2002. Many people in shelters are coming from public housing.

Jacqueline Burney and Ronald Clark, 49th & B Street Cooperative Association: Ms. Burney and Mr. Clark recounted the history of the 49th & B Street Cooperative, including their difficulties with their management agent. They felt they were mismanaged and given false information. They requested a CDBG grant to bring their building up to standard.

Robert Pohlman, Executive Director, Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED): "There has been substantial progress made in the District in FY 2002 to address housing and community development needs." CNHED cites strengthened management, a competitive funding process, and updated Housing Production Trust Fund regulations. CNHED recommends four improvements: (1) more Tenant Purchase and Technical Assistance funding; (2) a more inclusive NOFA/RFP (including greater availability of HOME and CDBG funds through that process, and review of the rating factors used in each RFP); (3) development of a comprehensive housing strategy to spell out priorities, strategies and production goals; and (4) revival of the Multifamily Homestead Program, to expand the supply of affordable rental or homeownership opportunities.

Mike Dinkin, Program Manager, University Legal Services: He supported Mr. Rothman and Mr. Pohlman's comments. He described the tenant purchase timeline and reiterated the need to have tenant purchase funds separate from the NOFA. He is the only person for the whole city taking calls from tenant organizations re. tenant purchase, down from 14 staff fifteen years ago. Opportunities will be lost to save affordable housing through tenant purchase as the market continues to rise. He also noted that no one has followed up on the cooperatives that have been formed in the past, to see whether they are still working.

Daniel M. Pernel III, Vice Chair, ANC 6A Commission (written submission at the hearing): "... many people of color, persons with disabilities, senior citizens and individuals who fall below the poverty line have short changed." Luxury developments are displacing long-time community residents.

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DHCD received two sets of written comments on the CAPER. The first was from Capital Area ADAPT and DIRECT Action. Capital Area ADAPT is a local chapter of a national disability rights advocacy group, and DIRECT Action is a District-based disability rights advocacy organization. The groups "advocate for the civil rights of people with disabilities, including the right to live in accessible *integrated* housing, rather than segregated housing, and they "urge DHCD to follow the lead of many other cities and states and use federal Community Development Block Grant money to allow disabled tenants to modify their homes." This action would include providing grants to residents in wheelchairs who live in rented housing as well as owner-occupied housing. Capital Area ADAPT/DIRECT Action urges DHCD to make more funds available for accessibility modifications. It also urges DHCD to devote resources to hold its grantees accountable for compliance with Section 504 of the Fair Housing Act.

The second set was from Alternative Housing Solutions, LLC, which helps consumers locate

and obtain rental housing. Alternative Housing Solutions recommended the inclusion of additional information in the CAPER, including demographic information, descriptions of DHCD's public awareness strategies for its various initiatives, and the steps it undertakes to prevent "flipping" of assisted properties. The group also recommended that DHCD include its definition of affordable housing in the CAPER, to clarify the meaning of the term (see page 1). A number of these suggestions will be incorporated into the FY 2004 Action Plan that DHCD will produce in the spring of FY 2003.